

Franklinia laying blue eggs—or white eggs, it follows that the cuckoos watching Franklinia building their nest cannot tell what type of egg the Franklinia will lay until they lay their first egg.

A blue egg cuckoo watching a pair of Franklinia building would inspect the first egg they lay. If it was white it would seem that the cuckoo refuses it and presumably goes on elsewhere in its search for a blue egg Franklinia. And *vice versa*.

In other words the cuckoo is observing very closely the eggs of the species it dupes and then exercises a very discriminating choice. *The cuckoo chooses—not the dupe.*

The colouration of the cuckoo's egg is due to the 'initiative' of the cuckoo—to its desire to the end of mimicry—which has given the perfection of resemblance achieved over countless generations.

As regards the call of the Plaintive Cuckoo, the 'twēēt-ā-twēēt' note is uttered in the cold weather, for I have heard these cuckoos calling thus in Karenni in November and December. On the other hand, I have never heard the cadence note being called in the cold season and I take this note to be a purely breeding call.

TAUNGGYI, S. SHAN STATES,

BURMA.

T. R. LIVESEY.

July 30, 1936.

XX.—THE SMALL GREEN-BILLED MALKOHA

[*RHOPODYTES VIRIDIROSTRIS* (JERDON)].

The only instance mentioned by Baker and Inglis in *The Birds of Southern India* where this bird was found breeding was by Sir A. Cardew in the North Arcot District on the 10th March 1885.

A nest of this bird was taken by me on 23rd April 1936 near Shiyali in the Tanjore District. The nest was situated in a very thorny bush, alongside a small river and at about five feet from the ground. The bird was seated on the nest which made identification easy. The nest appeared small for the bird and consisted of a few dry twigs and dried leaves for a lining. The nest contained two eggs, partly set, chalky white in colour and in shape blunt ovals measuring 1.12 in. by 0.88 in. The surface of the eggs was scratched by the claws of the bird.

TANJORE.

C. H. BIDDULPH.

September 4, 1936.

[As to the breeding of the Small Green Billed Malkoha (*R. viridirostris*). Whistler in his Report on the Vernay Scientific Survey of the Eastern Ghats (*Journal*, xxxvii, 525) refers to LaPersonne's statement that he believed that these birds were breeding at Kuruinbapatti in April and in the Shevaroy Tirthamalai area in May and June. This Mr. Whistler considered late as the series of skins obtained by LaPersonne in June contained young birds in post juvenal moult. Mr. Biddulph's note helps to confirm Mr. Whistler's conclusion. During the recent ornithological survey of Travancore Mr. Humayun Abdulali found a nest of this Malkoha with two eggs on 28 April (1933) at Arāmboli, a locality adjoining the Tinnevely District of Madras.—Eds.]